

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1-27. (canceled)

28. (previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide having at least 80% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228; or
- (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268,  
wherein the encoded polypeptide promotes proliferation of inner ear supporting cells.

29. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 85% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228; or
- (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268,  
wherein the encoded polypeptide promotes proliferation of inner ear supporting cells.

30. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268,

wherein the encoded polypeptide promotes proliferation of inner ear supporting cells.

31. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229;

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268,

wherein the encoded polypeptide promotes proliferation of inner ear supporting cells.

32. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229;

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268,

wherein the encoded polypeptide promotes proliferation of inner ear supporting cells.

33. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

- (a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229;
- (b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide-of SEQ ID NO:229;
- (d) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228;
- (e) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228;

or

[[e]] (f) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268.

34. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229.

35. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:229, lacking its associated signal peptide.

36. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide-of SEQ ID NO:229.

37. (canceled)

38. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228.

39. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:228.

40. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203268.

- 41. (canceled)
- 42. (canceled)
- 43. (canceled)
- 44. (previously presented) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of Claim 28.
- 45. (previously presented) The vector of Claim 44, wherein said nucleic acid is operably linked to control sequences recognized by a host cell transformed with the vector.
- 46. (previously presented) An isolated host cell comprising the vector of Claim 44.
- 47. (previously presented) The isolated host cell of Claim 46, wherein said cell is a CHO cell, an *E. coli* or a yeast cell.